

The Role of Didactic Games in Developing Students' Thinking Abilities in Primary School Mother Tongue Lessons

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Abstract. *The educational process is extremely complex. The effectiveness of education depends on the activity of both the teacher and the student, the availability of teaching tools, the organizational, scientific, and methodological perfection of the educational process, the society's need for knowledgeable individuals, and other yet-to-be-identified factors. Society demands high educational effectiveness based on its social-political needs. Currently, as economic structures based on market relations are being established in Uzbekistan, there is a growing demand for individuals who have broad and deep knowledge and can apply it practically. Knowledgeable, entrepreneurial, and socially active individuals find their place in society and work.*

Key words: *didactic games, independent thinking, primary school, mother tongue lessons, educational process, creative thinking, pedagogical games.*

Introduction

The various stages of education should be organized in such a way that, while providing young people with deep and well-founded knowledge, it also teaches them to think broadly [1]. The current requirement of the education process is to develop the student's need for independent knowledge acquisition. Several methods have been tested in pedagogical practice and research. Problem-based education, activating students in the learning process, collaborative pedagogy, relying on key terms, optimizing education, and others have all been tested through experience [2]. The main essence of modern pedagogical technology is to engage students in the learning process and ensure complete knowledge acquisition [3]. The primary goal of implementing modern pedagogical technology is for most students to thoroughly master the knowledge being taught. Can all students fully master the knowledge being taught? According to foreign scholars' studies, 5% of students in a learning group will have the opportunity to learn ahead of the curriculum. However, only 5% of these students will not be able to master the program as a whole. Thus, the teacher can work successfully with 95% of the students in the class. If 70% of the knowledge in the curriculum is mastered by all students, it can be considered that complete mastery has been achieved. Because, according to scholars, a student who has this level of knowledge will have the ability to independently acquire the remaining information [4], [5]. Modern pedagogical technology in the education process does not force students but engages them in an interesting way, allowing them to express all their thoughts. Modern pedagogical technology requires that students have a pleasant psychological state during the learning process and encourages them to work with interest [6].

Methodology

This research aims to explore the role of didactic games in developing independent thinking skills among primary school students, particularly within the framework of the mother tongue curriculum.

The methodology is based on a qualitative approach, combining literature review, classroom observations, and the analysis of teaching practices in primary schools.

1. **Literature Review:** A thorough review of scientific literature was conducted to understand the theoretical basis for using didactic games in the classroom. The review focused on how games contribute to cognitive development, creativity, and independent thinking. Previous studies related to game-based learning were also examined to assess their impact on students' ability to think independently.

2. **Classroom Observations:** Observations were made in various primary school classrooms, focusing on the application of didactic games in mother tongue lessons. The observations aimed to assess how teachers integrate these games into their lessons and the types of skills that students develop as a result. The primary focus was on students' engagement, their ability to participate in discussions, and their independent thinking during the games.

3. **Data Collection:** Data was collected through direct observation of classroom activities, interviews with teachers, and analysis of students' performance during game-based lessons. Teachers were interviewed to gather insights into how didactic games are structured and their educational purpose. Additionally, students' responses to games and their independent thinking abilities were noted during the observations.

4. **Game Analysis:** Specific games, such as "I Will Check Myself," "Find the Letters," and "Mystery Word," were analyzed for their ability to enhance cognitive skills. The games were chosen for their relevance to the primary school mother tongue curriculum and their potential to foster independent thinking. Each game was evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Engagement:** How well the game captures the attention of the students.
- **Cognitive Development:** The extent to which the game encourages students to think critically and independently.
- **Skill Development:** How the game helps students improve their linguistic and problem-solving skills.

5. **Evaluation:** The effectiveness of the games was evaluated by comparing the students' performance before and after the game-based lessons. The analysis focused on the improvement in students' ability to think independently, express themselves creatively, and solve problems. Additionally, teacher feedback was considered to assess the overall success of the game-based approach in fostering a productive learning environment.

Results and Discussion

In the educational process, didactic games are also considered a tool for developing students' thinking [7], [8]. These games should not be viewed merely as a means of recreation or passing time but rather as an educational activity. Below, we discuss didactic games organized in primary school mother tongue lessons and their unique features in relation to independent thinking [9].

Quiet Games

- **"I will Check Myself":** In this game, a short dictation text is selected and conducted at the beginning of the lesson. The teacher asks students to write a short dictation. Once all students have finished writing, the teacher writes the dictation on the board. If the dictation was previously written on the board and covered, the teacher uncovers it. Students then compare it with their own writing to check for any differences.
- **"Story":** The teacher writes several words on the board. Students independently form a story using those words. This process enhances their vocabulary while also improving their ability to form correct sentences, pronounce sounds accurately, and develop creative and independent thinking skills [10].

- **"Who Is It? What Is It?":** A number of objects are placed on the table. The teacher describes one of the objects, and students must guess which one it is based on the description. This game helps students develop alertness, attention to detail, and independent thinking.
- **"Guess It":** The teacher gives a clue based on a specific characteristic, and students name the objects that match this description. The students who provide the most correct answers win the game. This game helps ease the process of teaching the basic concepts of word categories and also fosters quick thinking, independence, alertness, and creativity.
- **"It Can't Be":** During this game, the teacher reads a text, and students must identify sentences or statements that describe impossible events. After conducting this game several times, students may be asked to create such stories independently.
- **"Continue":** In this game, the teacher begins a story, and students independently continue it. This encourages creativity, independent thinking, and the development of writing skills such as composing essays or stories. It also improves vocabulary.
- **"Mystery Word":** The teacher asks students to figure out how many times the same word is written in a set of "mystery boxes". The student who guesses the most correct answers wins. This game introduces students to puzzles and helps expand their thinking [11], [12], [13].
- **"What Is He Doing?" (Pantomime):** One student comes up in front of the class and performs silent actions. The rest of the class works together to explain what the student is doing. This game not only improves students' speech skills but also nurtures quick thinking and responsiveness, while fostering creativity and alertness in reading and language lessons [14], [15].

These didactic games, when applied in the classroom, play a significant role in the development of students' independent thinking, creativity, and cognitive skills.

Conclusion

In scientific literature, it is emphasized that when organizing didactic games, the main didactic goal of the lesson should be considered. Games can be used at all stages of the lesson. In the process of teaching primary school students independent thinking, the educational games used in the primary school mother tongue curriculum are analyzed. According to the 1st-grade mother tongue curriculum, the first section is "Sounds and Letters." In this section, games such as "I will Check Myself," "Find the Letters," "Mystery Word," "This Is Mine," and "Word Finder" can be used. In the process of teaching the "Words" section, games like "I will Check Myself," "Who Is It?" "What Is It?" "Guess It," "Read and See," "Mystery Word," "Chain Game," "Word Game," and others guide students toward independent thinking. In the "Speech. Sentence" section, using games such as "Story," "I Will Check Myself," "Wrong Conclusion," "It Can't Be," "Continue," "Journey," and "Living Story" increases students' interest in the educational process. In higher grades, students adapt much more to the school environment, and their interest in acquiring knowledge increases. Now, they can be prepared for more serious tasks. However, this does not mean that the use of games in the educational process should decrease. While students in the 1st grade are more interested in games, in the higher grades, the content and outcome of the game become more significant. In these grades, students begin to strive to participate in games where they can demonstrate their abilities and capabilities.

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